

We Claim:

1. In combination, a vehicle having

a floor for supporting passengers,

a side wall extending upward from said floor,

a passenger seat adjacent said side wall, and

means for securing a wheelchair to said vehicle,

wherein said passenger seat is foldable from a seating position occupying an area above said floor to a folded position that allows said wheelchair to be positioned in said area, and

said means for securing a wheelchair is fixed to said vehicle and comprises means for engaging said wheelchair and is movable between an operative position extending into said area for receiving said wheel chair and a second position remote from said area.

2. A combination according to claim 1 wherein said means for securing is pivotally mounted to said vehicle for movement between said operative and second positions.

3. A combination according to claim 2 wherein said means for securing comprises an elongate bar having a pivotal connection at an end adjacent said side wall and latch means for holding said securing element in said operative position when said latch is engaged and for allowing said securing element to be moved to said second position when said latch means is disengaged.

4. A combination according to claim 3 wherein said latch means comprises a vertically movable pin and a recess for receiving said pin.

5. A combination according to claim 4 wherein said recess comprises a securing plate having an opening for receiving said pin, enclosure means beneath said securing plate forming a cavity for receiving a tip of said pin and for preventing debris from impacting said securing plate and pin from below said plate, and a flexible seal covering said plate

for preventing debris from impacting said securing plate and pin from above said securing plate, and a pivotally mounted cover plate covering said flexible seal.

6. A combination according to claim 1 further comprising second means for securing a wheel chair to a vehicle, wherein said second means for securing is spaced from said means for securing and comprises means for engaging a said wheelchair, whereby said means for engaging on said means for securing are adapted to engage one end of a said wheelchair and said means for engaging on said second means for securing are adapted to engage an opposite end of said wheelchair.

7. A combination according to claim 6 wherein said second means for securing is fixed to said vehicle for continuously extending into said area.

8. In combination,

a vehicle having an area for receiving a wheelchair, and

means for securing a wheelchair in said area to said vehicle, wherein said means for securing is fixed to said vehicle and comprises a movable element having means thereon for engaging a portion of said wheelchair in said area, said movable element being movable with respect to said vehicle between an operating position wherein said means for engaging is located relative to said area to allow said means for engaging to be attached to said portion of said wheelchair and a storage position wherein said means for engaging is located relative to said area to be remote from said portion of said wheelchair.

9. A combination according to claim 8 wherein said means for securing is mounted for rotational motion with respect to said vehicle.

10. A combination according to claim 9 wherein said means for securing is mounted for pivotal motion about a horizontal axis.

11. A combination according to claim 9 where said means for securing is mounted for pivotal motion about a vertical axis.

12. ~~A combination according to claim 8 wherein said means for securing is mounted for linear motion with respect to said vehicle.~~

13. A combination according to claim 8 wherein said means for engaging comprises a housing attached to said means for securing and a strap adjustably received in said housing.

14. A combination according to claim 13 wherein said means for securing further comprises a stationary element attached to said vehicle in a fixed position with respect to said area.

15. A combination according to claim 14 wherein said stationary element is attached to said movable element and has means for engaging said wheelchair thereon.

16. A combination according to claim 14 wherein said movable element is at one end of said area and said stationary element is at an opposite end of said area.

17. A combination according to claim 16 wherein said area comprises a first area for receiving a first wheelchair and a second area longitudinally aligned with said first area for receiving a second wheelchair, and said movable element is located between said first area and said second area.

18. A combination according to claim 17 wherein said means for securing further comprises a forward movable element having means thereon for engaging a portion of said second wheelchair in said second area, said forward movable element being movable with respect to said vehicle between an operating position wherein said means for engaging is located relative to said second area to allow said means for engaging to be attached to said portion of said second wheelchair and a storage position wherein said means for engaging is located relative to said second area to be remote from said portion of said second wheelchair.

19. A combination according to claim 14 wherein said stationary element comprises a first stationary element attached to said movable element at one end of said area and a second stationary element at an opposite end of said area.

20. ~~A combination according to claim 8 further comprising latch means for holding said movable securing element in said operative position when said latch is engaged and for allowing said movable securing element to be moved to said storage position when said latch means is disengaged.~~

5 21. A combination according to claim 20 wherein said latch means comprises a vertically movable pin and a recess for receiving said pin.

22. A combination according to claim 21 wherein said recess comprises a securing plate having an opening for receiving said pin, enclosure means beneath said securing plate forming a cavity for receiving a tip of said pin and for preventing debris from impacting said securing plate and pin from below said plate, and a flexible seal covering said plate for preventing debris from impacting said securing plate and pin from above said securing plate, and a pivotally mounted cover plate covering said flexible seal.

10 23. Apparatus for securing a wheelchair to a vehicle comprising
a bar,
15 an adjustable strap secured to said bar for engaging said wheelchair, and
means for mounting said bar to a vehicle such that said bar may be moved with respect to said vehicle between an operative position where said strap can be attached to said wheelchair and a storage position where said strap is remote from said wheelchair.

20 24. Apparatus according to claim 23 further comprising means for pivotally attaching said bar to said vehicle.

25 25. A method for attaching a wheelchair to a vehicle comprising:
providing said vehicle with an area for receiving said wheelchair,
providing said vehicle with means for securing said wheelchair in said area to said vehicle, wherein said means for securing is fixed to said vehicle and comprises a movable element having means thereon for engaging a portion of said wheelchair in said area, said movable element being movable with respect to said vehicle between

an operating position wherein said means for engaging is located relative to said area to allow said means for engaging to be attached to said portion of said wheelchair and a storage position wherein said means for engaging is located relative to said area to be remote from said portion of said wheelchair,

- 5 placing said wheelchair in said area,
- moving said movable element from said storage position to said operating position, and
- attaching said means for securing to said wheelchair.

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